

98 F.MILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND
REFORMER

stopped the publication. The second part was never written; yet the abortion—for it was nothing else — was issued in volume form,¹ and of recent years has even, been translated into English,² and reviewed approvingly by English critics! Zola himself always regarded it as the very worst of his productions. "What a wretched thing, my friend!" he remarked in a letter to M. George Charpentier twenty years after this story's first appearance.

"Nowadays young men of eighteen turn out work ten times superior in craftsmanship to what we produced when we were five and twenty."

This second failure to catch the public fancy injured Zola considerably in the opinion of Villemessant, but the latter continued to take various articles from him, such as a series of literary character-sketches, entitled "Marbres et Platres," in which figured such men as Flaubert, Janin, Taine, Paradol, and About. These articles were merely signed "Sirnplice," — Zola's name having become odious to

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the readers of "L'Eve'nement," — and portions were worked by the author into later studies on French literary men. About this time Villemessant found himself in serious difficulties with the authorities, through having sailed too

near to politics in a journal only authorised
for literature
and news. " L'Eve'nement" was suppressed,
but its editor
turned " Le Figaro " into a daily organ, and
Zola's services
were transferred to the latter journal. He
contributed to
it a number of Parisian and other sketches,
portions of

¹ "Le Voeu d'une Morte," Paris, Faure, 1866, 18mo.
Reissued by Char-
pentier, 1889 and 1891.

² " A Dead "Woman's Wish," translated by Count O. S. de
Soissons, Lon-
don, 1902.